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Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities
New York, 29 July-9 August 2002

# Draft Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities

## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 56/168 of 19 December 2001, the General Assembly decided to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to consider proposals for a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, based on the holistic approach in the work done in the fields of social development, human rights and non-discrimination and taking into account the recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission for Social Development. The Assembly also decided that, prior to its fifty-seventh session, the Ad Hoc Committee should hold at least one session of a duration of 10 working days.

## II. Organizational matters

### A. Opening and duration of the first session

2. The Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities held its first session at United Nations Headquarters from 29 July to 9 August 2002. In the course of its session, the Ad Hoc Committee held 18 plenary meetings and one meeting for panel discussions.

3. The Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs acted as the substantive secretariat, while the Disarmament and Decolonization Organs Servicing Branch of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services served as technical secretariat of the Ad Hoc Committee.

4. The 1st meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee was opened by the Vice-President of the General Assembly, Eladio Loizaga (Paraguay). Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, made a statement.

### B. Officers

5. At its 1st, 5th and 7th meetings, on 29 and 31 July and 1 August 2002, respectively, the Ad Hoc Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

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*Chairman*:
Luis **Gallegos** (Ecuador)

*Vice-Chairmen*:
Enrique **Manalo** (Philippines)
Jeanette **Ndhlovu** (South Africa)
Karina **Mårtensson** (Sweden)

## C. Agenda

6. At its 1st meeting, on 29 July 2002, the Ad Hoc Committee adopted its provisional agenda, as contained in document A/AC.265/L.1*, as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. General debate on issues concerning a new international instrument on disability, including proposals for a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.
5. Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee.
6. Adoption of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.
7. Other business.

## D. Documentation

7. The Ad Hoc Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General (A/AC.265/1);

(b) Provisional agenda (A/AC.265/L.1);

(c) List of participants (A/AC.265/INF/1);

(d) Comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities (Working paper submitted by Mexico) (A/AC.265/WP.1);

(e) Comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities (Position paper by the European Union) (A/AC.265/WP.2);

(f) Comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities (Position paper by China) (A/AC.265/WP.3);

(g) Compilation of international norms and standards relating to disability (A/AC.265/CRP.1);

(h) Human rights of persons with disabilities (A/AC.265/CRP.2);

(i) Interregional Seminar and Symposium on International Norms and Standards relating to Disability (A/AC.265/CRP.3);

(j) Report of the United Nations Consultative Expert Group Meeting on International Norms and Standards relating to Disability (A/AC.265/CRP.4);

(k) Indicative timetable of work (A/AC.265/CRP.5);

(l) Critical issues and trends related to disability and human rights: emerging issues and concepts (A/AC.265/CRP.6).

# III. Organization of work

8. At its 8th meeting, on 1 August 2002, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to organize its work in accordance with the thematic approach, including overarching principles/rights, equality in civil and political rights, equality in economic, social and cultural rights, panel discussions, monitoring mechanisms and other topics.

9. During its plenary meetings (29-31 July 2002), the Ad Hoc Committee heard general statements made by the representatives of the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Denmark (on behalf of the European Union), the Dominican Republic, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, the United States of America and Uruguay. General statements were also made by representatives of the following United Nations specialized agencies and bodies: the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also made statements: Disabled Peoples' International,

Inclusion International, Madre Inc., Support Coalition International, World Blind Union and World Federation of the Deaf.

10. At the 14th meeting, on 6 August 2002, upon the request of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized a panel for delegates and representatives of NGOs to exchange views on the issues with representatives of United Nations agencies and programmes. The panel was opened by Odile Frank (Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and moderated by Bengt Lindqvist, Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development. The following experts presented briefings on agreed subjects: Akiko Ito (Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), Jane Connors (Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), Mary Beth Weinberger (Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), Mary Chamie (Statistical Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), Brian Burdekin (Adviser to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), Gerald Quinn (author of the study conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), Gulbadan Habibi (United Nations Children's Fund), Steve Miller (ILO) and Javier Vasquez (Pan American Health Organization on behalf of the World Health Organization).

## IV. Decision

11. At its 8th meeting, on 1 August 2002, the Ad Hoc Committee adopted the following decision, presented by the Chairman:

**Decision on the modalities of the participation of accredited non-governmental organizations in the Ad Hoc Committee to consider proposals for a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities**

*The Ad Hoc Committee decides*:

1. That representatives from non-governmental organizations accredited to the Ad Hoc Committee may participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee by:

(a) Attending any public meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee;

(b) Making statements, given the availability of time, in accordance with current United Nations practice;

(c) When time is limited, selecting among themselves spokespersons, on a balanced and transparent basis, taking into account equitable geographic representation and diversity of non-governmental organizations;

(d) Receiving copies of the official documents as well as making written or other presentations. Written presentations shall not be issued as official documents except in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31. Furthermore, non-governmental organizations may make their material available to delegations in accessible areas designated by the Secretariat;

2. That the above modalities shall in no way create a precedent for other ad hoc committees of the General Assembly.

## V. Recommendations

12. **The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that the General Assembly, in accordance with the practice of rotating the chairmanship of a United Nations subsidiary organ and taking into consideration existing precedents of the organization, in its resolution to be adopted at the fifty-seventh session, request the elected officers of the Bureau to remain in office for the whole duration of the exercise.**

13. **The Ad Hoc Committee also recommends that the General Assembly consider the venue of the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee and include it in the relevant resolution to be adopted at its fifty-seventh session.**

14. **The Ad Hoc Committee requested the Secretariat to organize regional technical meetings as well as expert group meetings, as need be. It is the understanding of the Ad Hoc Committee that these meetings will be funded through the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability, the**

**Development Account or other voluntary contributions.**

15. **The Committee also decided to annex to the present report all working papers listed in paragraph 7.**

## VI. Adoption of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee

16. At the 19th meeting, on 9 August 2002, Jeanette Ndhlovu (South Africa), as Vice-Chairperson with rapporteurial responsibilities, introduced the draft report of the Ad Hoc Committee (A/AC.265/2).

17. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session (A/AC.265/2), as orally amended.

## Annex

### Documentation of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities

[Working papers to be attached.]